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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 5 July 2002, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Kumalo (Vice-President) ..... (South Africa)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

The contribution of human resources development, including in the areas of health and education, to the process of development (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Correa** (Franciscans International), speaking also on behalf of the non-governmental Committee on Social Development, welcomed the holistic vision of human resources development which had emerged from United Nations conferences and summits during the past decade, with poverty eradication as an overriding goal. Problems and strategies had been identified, and the Council must mobilize the political will to support them.

2. More attention must be paid to literacy, basic education and employment-oriented education, and Governments must ensure that poor children in rural and urban areas, especially girls, received basic education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had done well to make education for all the centrepiece of its medium-term plan and to give girls' education top priority in its strategic plan. Affordable job-oriented courses must be provided for youth, especially in developing countries, and older persons should be recruited to act as mentors, advisers and mediators. Reductions in military spending would allow more funds to be allocated to education, and arms-surrendering programmes, especially in Africa, should be linked to capacity-building, education and job opportunities. Recent terrorist attacks having demonstrated that terrorists received more support and sympathy from uneducated and unemployed youth. In Monterrey his organization had called on Governments to join in an international coalition against poverty. The developed world and the Bretton Woods institutions must give priority to capacity-building, education and job opportunities, while at the same time providing financial assistance to developing countries which were making genuine efforts to educate their citizens, especially the poor and girl children.

3. In the area of health, he supported the finding of the Commission on Macroeconomics and Health that health was a prerequisite for economic development in poor societies and not vice versa. As to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, he hoped that its creation would be expedited so that aid could be sent to deserving people in time. He urged developed countries to provide more funds for research to discover effective medicines to prevent and cure those deadly diseases.

4. Structural adjustment policies should not force developing countries to withdraw subsidies for education and health. Rather, the developed world and the Bretton Woods institutions should increase official development assistance and cancel the debt of the poorest countries so that they could allocate sufficient funds to human resources development. The developing countries, for their part, should devote greater attention to good governance and transparency in order to ensure proper management of programmes and resources for the benefit of those in need. Gender balance should continue to be given serious consideration at all levels, including in budget allocations.

5. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were committed to helping identify critical situations where social interventions were necessary and to remaining engaged in the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development. The Council had a pivotal role to play in maintaining the focus on financing for human resources development, and he welcomed its increasing openness to allowing accredited NGOs to participate in high-level meetings and round tables. He hoped that NGOs would be included as active partners in all future United Nations events and processes.

Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation

(b) Reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme (E/2001/35; E/2002/11, 34 (Part I), 36, 54 and 69; E/2002/L.10; E/2002/CRP.1; DP/2002/10; DP/2002/CRP.13)

Policy exchange with the executive heads of the United Nations funds and programmes on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial policy review

6. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)), focusing on the outcome and implications of the special session on children, said the session had been preceded by a

thorough review of progress made following the 1990 World Summit for Children, including high-level regional meetings and the record breaking Say Yes for Children campaign, in which 95 million people had endorsed priority action for children. In addition to 69 Governments, there had been broad-based participation from civil society and the public and private sectors, with many delegations having included children as official members. Children themselves had been able to show leadership and participate in proceedings, including plenary meetings and round tables, engaging in energetic dialogue with world leaders. She suggested that children should continue to be included as full participants at future special sessions and summits.

7. The special session had culminated in the adoption of a final document entitled "A world fit for children", which outlined States' commitments in the areas of promoting healthy lives, providing quality education, protecting against abuse, exploitation and violence and combating HIV/AIDS. The commitments in the areas of health and education built on the outcomes of the 1990 World Summit and stressed issues such as child survival and access to health care and education, with special emphasis on ensuring completion of studies, not simply initial enrolment. The commitments relating to HIV/AIDS took into account the results of the special session on HIV/AIDS.

8. The Plan of Action contained 21 goals and 99 targets, including indicators such as maternal, infant and under-five mortality, school enrolment and completion rates, immunization coverage rates and access to safe water and sanitation, all of which were closely related to the Millennium development goals. Follow-up to the Plan of Action would be linked to implementation of those goals. The Plan of Action called for developing and strengthening national and regional action plans with precise timetables and measurable goals and targets and for integration of its goals into domestic development and poverty eradication strategies. It also called for cooperation with civil society stakeholders, including children and their families, and for allocation of additional resources at the national and international levels.

9. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt) said that there seemed to be a great deal of emphasis on statistics and quantitative analysis. He wondered how UNICEF reconciled the promotion of quality and harmonization of educational levels at the international and national levels in the context of globalization with the need for preservation of national identity.

10. **Mr. Rosenthal** (Observer for Guatemala) recalled that during preparations for the special session there had been marked differences with regard to certain issues. In relation to the goals set out 11 years before, he wondered whether the outcome of the special session could be considered a step forward, maintenance of the status quo or a step backwards.

11. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund), in response to the representative of Egypt, said that while quantitative measures such as enrolment figures remained important, increasing emphasis was being put on qualitative factors and effectiveness. Harmonization of education levels did not imply imposition of a one-size-fits-all solution. The Plan of Action called for education for all but with specific policy options to be decided by Governments and integrated into national strategies. Qualitative factors to be taken into account included completion of education, usefulness of the education provided, teaching of life skills, whether the education helped the individual function in society subsequently, interactivity and quality of teacher training.

12. In response to the representative of Guatemala, she said that the outcome document was of the special session was a strong one which reflected all the major issues and moved the agenda forward in relation to the 1990 World Summit, which she recalled had not been an official United Nations meeting. The recent gathering had been the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to children's issues. In 1990 the focus had been on health, with education a secondary issue. The current document reflected unfinished business from 1990, for example the goal of reducing under-five mortality by one third, a goal reached by 60 countries, with 100 other countries having reduced mortality by 20 per cent. The Plan of Action moved the agenda forward in the area of child survival and reflected new concern for early childhood development in the first three years of life. In education it stressed not only access but quality and completion of education. In the area of protection, it contained the first concrete language on protection of children and re-emphasized concerns relating to HIV/AIDS. By 10 September 2001 the framework for the issues of health, education, protection and HIV/AIDS had been in place.

13. The remaining issues had been resources, monitoring, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reproductive health. There had been no real change with regard to the latter, the document reflected the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, with regard to resources and monitoring, although there was no new language, the outcome document did not represent a step backwards. Overall, therefore, the Plan of Action broke new ground in the areas of health, education and protection, reiterated concerns with regard to HIV/AIDS and did not move backwards in other areas.

14. **Ms. Loemban Tobing-Klein** (Suriname) supported the inclusion of young people in delegations to major conferences and also expressed thanks for the letter sent by UNICEF to delegations following the Summit with an evaluation of the delegations' contribution and suggestions on what needed to be done in follow-up by each individual country. She asked whether UNICEF had any plans to address the problem of high dropout rates, in particular for boys, which was a problem in the Caribbean region.

15. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) stressed the importance not only of ensuring initial enrolment in school but also of ensuring completion of primary and secondary education. The outcome document contained specific language on reducing the number of children out of school, which included those who had never attended school, usually girls, and those who had dropped out, usually for economic reasons for boys and because of early marriage for girls. The document called on Governments to set goals in that area and work in cooperation with UNICEF and other United Nations agencies to achieve those goals.

Panel discussion on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/201 on the triennial policy review

16. **Ms. Henkin** (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that the common country assessment (CCA) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) had been introduced in 1999 as part of the ongoing reform process, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of the United Nations system at the country level. The Secretary-General's Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (A/56/326) and his report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574) had underscored the significance of both tools in support of development and the reduction of extreme poverty. General Assembly resolution 56/201 of 21 December 2001 had further recognized the CCA as a common analytical instrument for the United Nations system and UNDAF as the common planning framework for the development operations of the United Nations system at the country level.

17. In preparation for the triennial policy review, an external evaluation of both processes had been conducted, based on the implementation of 105 CCAs and 63 UNDAFs over a three-year period, and had resulted in constructive recommendations. Following extensive consultations, revised guidelines had emerged. New elements in the guidelines included particular emphasis on broad-based national participation in a high-quality analysis of development challenges through the CCA, under the overall guidance and leadership of Governments. The revised guidelines emphasized quality products that responded to national priorities and accorded with the Millennium development goals and other international commitments. They also stressed the importance of linking the CCA and UNDAF with other national strategic planning tools, notably the poverty reduction strategy paper and the sector-wide approach. The CCA and UNDAF exercises were now fully integrated into the programme formulation processes of UNFPA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF in accordance with the harmonized-programme approval process.

18. The revised guidelines were currently being piloted in Benin, Ecuador, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger and Pakistan. To support the six United Nations country teams and their national counterparts, a virtual support system — comprising staff members from headquarters and regional offices — was being established. All partners must work together to further improve the second generation of CCAs and UNDAFs.

19. With a view to improving the gender balance of the United Nations Resident Coordinator system, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) had agreed earlier in the year to make sure that at least 50 per cent of the candidates proposed for assessment were women. Regrettably, women still only accounted for 26 per cent of Resident Coordinators, and at the most recent assessment, only 18 of the 60 candidates had been women. However, all agencies were

committed to achieving parity among Resident Coordinators in the foreseeable future.

20. **Mr. Graisse** (World Food Programme (WFP)) said that UNDG had been expanded to include all agencies with resident missions at the country level and its membership now mirrored the composition of the United Nations country team. The scope of UNDG had also been enhanced with the inclusion of the World Bank as an observer.

21. Earlier in the year, UNDG and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Activities had prepared a joint United Nations response to humanitarian and development needs in Afghanistan, providing a good example of how the two bodies could cooperate in a large and complex emergency. Cooperation between UNDG and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security had also been increased.

22. Further progress had been made by the agency members of the UNDG Executive Committee with regard to the country programme approval process, which was designed to reduce country-programme preparation time and to reduce the workload for government partners. The process took into account the timing of CCAs and UNDAFs, which had to be in place before the detailed design of an individual agency's cooperation programme could begin. The UNDAF was now the basic tool for programme planning, bringing together the Government, United Nations agencies, Bretton Woods institutions, civil society and bilateral agencies.

23. There had also been substantial collaboration between the funds and programmes and the Bretton Woods institutions, particularly in preparations for the International Conference on Financing for Development held in Monterrey, Mexico. As an example of such cooperation, World Bank representatives had met with UNDG agencies to discuss business relationships with United Nations agencies in Bank-financed projects, with a view to establishing more harmonized operational procedures. WFP now possessed a liaison office in Washington devoted exclusively to working with the World Bank, and joint programming was already under way with the Bank on nutrition and school feeding. All partners at the global level were clearly focused on strengthening such collaboration. The remaining challenge was to ensure that the same degree of collaboration took place at the country level.

24. **Mr. Diabre** (United Nations Development Programme) said that in the consolidated list of issues related to the coordination of operational activities for development (E/2002/CRP.1), with the exception of the annex containing the programme of work for the simplification and harmonization of the United Nations funds and programmes, there was little that was not already contained in the reports regularly submitted to the Executive Boards and transmitted to the Council for review. The conference room paper should thus be limited to one or two new issues requiring the Council's guidance, such as the specific issues under the triennial policy review.

25. The Administrator of UNDP — in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Development Group — had been mandated to work on the Millennium development goals campaign and to report on implementation. UNDG had prepared a strategy for that purpose, which focused on reporting, partnerships in operational activities and awareness-raising campaigns. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs was leading the reporting effort, which involved preparation of country reports based on information available in the CCA. UNDG was also beginning to work more closely with the regional commissions and had prepared a guidance note to country offices on Millennium development goal reports. In the context of partnerships, a dedicated UNDG working group was working to ensure that the Millennium development goals were reflected in all future programming and operational instruments. Such work would provide critical information to drive a series of awareness-raising campaigns. At the country level, the campaigns would be driven by local actors and based on local priorities, but linked to the same underlying goals. The aim was to make the Millennium development goals the lynchpin of the compact that had emerged in Monterrey.

26. A broader debate was under way on how to fulfil funding commitments. The higher replenishment of international development assistance was an important step, as was the decision to turn some 20 per cent of such resources into grants. It was time for the donor nations to accord the same level of political commitment to funding for United Nations development efforts.

27. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that the work on the issues of simplification and harmonization of rules and

procedures for operational activities for development was being led by a joint Working Group made up of a core team of senior staff from UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and UNICEF, guided by a full-time facilitator assigned to UNDG, and assisted by technical subgroups on financial policies, donor reporting and monitoring and evaluation. The Working Group was at all times driven by field-based programmatic considerations. It had studied key similarities and differences in the various ways of preparing and implementing country programmes, and the relative advantages and disadvantages. All agencies therefore now had a much better understanding of how each of them worked. The Working Group had identified 17 areas that could benefit from change, including national execution, harmonization of terminology, mid-term reviews, donor reporting and audit requirements. Its recommendations, set out in documents E/2002/59 and E/2002/CRP.1, appendix I, covered implementation modalities, policies, tools or practices. Heads of agencies would be responsible for areas of high priority where progress could be made relatively rapidly. Throughout, the aim would be to bring as much unity as possible to the diverse funds and programmes and to decide on good practices and good principles that could be adopted by each agency rather than searching for lowest common denominators. Taken as a whole, the proposals held great potential for reducing transaction costs for Governments, ensuring a better fit between UNDAF and country programmes, making United Nations programmes more effective, facilitating joint programming, improving transparency and accountability, and furthering national ownership and capacity-building.

28. Contact was being maintained with bilateral and multilateral partners to learn their own approach to harmonization and simplification. Consultation with key national and local-level partners was considered very important. Field staff familiar with day-to-day operations in a multi-agency environment were being asked for their views on proposals from the Working Group in an exercise that was designed to make the United Nations agencies more effective partners with Governments and other stakeholders.

29. **The President** invited the Council to put questions to the panel.

30. **Ms. Christensen** (Observer for Denmark), speaking on behalf of the European Union, welcomed the cooperation under way at the country level in the context of the CCA and UNDAF exercises. The panel should comment on measures being taken to enhance national ownership of the development process and to ensure an appropriate division of labour between the actors on the ground, particularly in the implementation of poverty reduction strategy papers. It was also important to ensure complementarity of action. The European Union supported the decision to facilitate joint monitoring mechanisms and welcomed the programme of work for the simplification and harmonization of the United Nations funds and programmes. The panel should further comment on the feasibility of the joint offices proposed.

31. **Mr. Korneev** (Russian Federation) said that the Council's practice of considering a consolidated list of issues should be continued since it fully accorded with its coordinating and leadership role in operational activities. UNDG also had a key function to play in the reform process. His delegation welcomed the inclusion of all agencies active at the country level within the Group, as well as the observer status accorded to the World Bank. It particularly valued the work of the agency members of the UNDG Executive Committee. The panel should also comment on the decision-making process within UNDG and on the nature of the World Bank's involvement. Further information on the potential for additional cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions at the country level would also be appreciated, particularly in areas that were traditionally the domain of the specialized agencies, and in the light of the recent decision concerning the financing of the Bank's activities.

32. His delegation also welcomed the programme of work for the simplification and harmonization of the United Nations funds and programmes and endorsed the view that country programmes must provide the basis for such work. The panel should confirm that the various agencies were indeed adopting a programme approach and harmonizing their programme cycles.

33. He shared the view that the preparation of UNDAF was not suited to some 65 countries owing to the absence of a United Nations country team or to the specificities of a particular country situation. In that connection, the panel should identify mechanisms best able to ensure effective and coordinated work of United Nations agencies in post-conflict situations, such as in Afghanistan. Additional information on the simplification and harmonization of funding procedures would also be welcome.

34. **Mr. Rohmer** (Observer for Switzerland) said that he seemed to recall that the UNICEF Executive Board had discussed the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children and taken account of it in its medium-term plan.

35. The consolidated list of issues, a very comprehensive one, could probably be shortened. For instance, the programme of work listing 17 areas in which the rules and procedures for operational activities for development could be simplified (E/2002/CRP.1, appendix I) seemed too ambitious. In the case of standardization of reporting, he believed it would be worthwhile to set up a small task force, including representatives of donor countries, to arrive at a broadly acceptable format, covering also reporting to donors.

36. The following week the World Bank would for the first time have available 20 per cent of its funding for grant investments, and the collaboration between the United Nations agencies and the World Bank on that score had to be discussed. Was the World Bank, for instance, going to use its grant money to expand into areas which thus far had been covered by the agencies? The issue should be included in the Council's regular review of the broad picture of bilateral and multilateral international development cooperation.

37. **Mr. Palu** (Australia) said that while the CCA and UNDAF were good examples of the progress already made by the United Nations system in harmonizing country-level approaches, he wondered whether there had been any advance in joint programming, which would be especially useful in countries where the United Nations presence was limited and would in any case be essential if the benefits of the United Nations system were to be fully realized.

38. **Ms. Bellamy** (Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund) said that UNICEF had indeed discussed the follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on children. As to the recommendations for harmonization and simplification, they had in fact already been prioritized in the consolidated list of issues (E/2002/CRP.1) by assigning high, medium or low priority to each of the 17 proposals in appendix I. UNDG did not follow a formal system of voting and adoption of decisions but rather engaged in full discussions as a result of which certain actions were taken. It kept constantly in mind what was happening at the field level. In order to understand what was and was not working, UNDG planned to schedule country visits for later in the year. It hoped to gain a clearer idea of when it would be best to implement programmes jointly and when it would be preferable to plan and monitor programmes jointly but implement them separately. It was too soon to report on the question of joint offices, for the pilot mission to the Maldives the previous month had been the first such attempt. UNDG had already sent some guidance to the field on joint programming, but clearly its directives had to be more specific.

39. UNDG had not yet had an opportunity to study the new grant component of international development assistance. The World Bank would probably make every effort to get in first at the country level, especially now that it had the additional grant money at its disposal. The solution might be for donors to equalize the balance by giving more to the United Nations Funds and Programmes.

40. **Mr. Ziabre** (United Nations Development Programme) said that in its revision of the CCA and UNDAF guidelines, UNDG had stressed that the whole development approach had to be rooted in national planning precisely in order to ensure national ownership, and the guidelines clearly established how the link had to be maintained in the course of the country-programme approval process.

41. The interaction of the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations funds and programmes had greatly improved recently. The World Bank had joined UNDG in the discussions about best practices. At the country level, the United Nations funds and programmes were entrenched as stakeholders in the various countries, and the Bretton Woods institutions were participating with them. The United Nations agencies, especially UNDP, had been active from the start in the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) process through their assessments of the levels and nature of poverty in the various countries. Many countries had subsequently joined the PRSP process with the guidance of the World Bank, which used the work of the agencies as seed material. The agencies had persuaded the World Bank that it could not both lead and monitor the PRSP process, and that their assistance was needed for the monitoring function. Indeed, the collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations system in that area had been highly successful.

42. In conflict and post-conflict situations, UNDG had worked well with the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Activities and the entire United Nations family, especially in Afghanistan, under the leadership of the Seed Review Group.

43. UNDP would indeed like to see a wider debate on the question of international development assistance funding. While it was appropriate that the World Bank should have some grant funding at its disposal, it would be equally appropriate for the United Nations agencies, which until now had had to rely on grant money, to be given a more predictable funding base. Also, the question of any duplication should be considered in the context of the use of grants by both the Bretton Woods institutions and the agencies.

44. **Ms. Henkin** (Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund), referring to the division of labour between the United Nations agencies and the World Bank in programme development, said that the agencies had a comparative advantage in the social sectors and issues and in monitoring, while the World Bank had a comparative advantage in the macroeconomic framework and fiscal issues.

45. Various agencies had in the past few years been using a multi-year funding framework and had introduced reforms in order to achieve a better and more integrated programme approach based on predictable funding. At its latest session, the UNDG Executive Committee had adopted a decision reminding Governments of the funding commitments they had made under the Plan of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Although no such funding had yet materialized, UNFPA had managed to improve its performance.

46. **Mr. Graisse** (Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme) warned that funds for development were dwindling and that WFP, for example, would have virtually no financial resources left by 2004 unless additional funding was provided.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.